Ally Sloper's Half Holiday

BEING A SELECTION, SIDE-SPLITTING, SENTIMENTAL, AND SERIOUS, FOR THE BENEFIT OF OLD BOYS, YOUNG BOYS, ODD BOYS GENERALLY, AND EVEN GIRLS.

Vol. II—No. 87.] SATURDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1885. [ONE PENNY.

ALLY SLOPER'S CHRISTMAS GAMES.

"Yes, dear, Christmas Eve was a most enjoyable evening—in a quiet and homely way, of course; and, after all, as Ma says, 'There's no place like home.' How true that is! After tea, Poor Pa made up like Father Christmas, and caused great mirth. Unfortunately, however, he caught cold, and is not at all well to-day."

[EXTRACT FROM TOOTSIE'S CORRESPONDENCE.

CHRISTMAS: AN EPIC. BY "OLD '85."

CHRISTMAS comes but once a year,
It comes bravely when it comes, though;
Plum-puddings we eat all the year—
Like these, they're not stuck with plums so.

Mince-pies come then, and mistletoe,
A parasite esteem'd by misses;
For e'en the ancientest come then
"Permiscuously" in for kisses.

LAYING A GHOST.

WHEN this century was so young that it could hardly have been able to toddle all alone, the Hammersmith Ghost was scaring folks out of their wits.

There were many ghosts about just then, but this was a particularly troublesome one. One day a waggoner, driving a team of eight horses, and carrying in his waggon sixteen passengers, was so terrified by the sudden appearance of the ghost that he flung himself off his seat into the road, and took to his heels, whilst the horses, as frightened as he was, broke into a mad gallop, and the fearful rolling of the heavy vehicle pitched the insiders on to the top of one another, a confused mass of legs and arms, pantaloons and petticoats, to the no small danger of their lives.

The whole neighbourhood was in a state of intense alarm, and no woman or child, and very few men, would venture out alone at night with the chance of meeting the grim and gruesome figure shrouded in white, lurking round dark corners to pounce out on them.

But at length arose one, Francis Smith, who determined to watch for and shoot the ghost. Accordingly, one night he lay in wait in Black Lion Lane, and, after a while, saw a figure, clothed in white, slowly approaching. "Damn you!" shouted Smith, "who are you? I'll shoot you if you don't speak."

But the figure spoke not, as it slowly crept forward. In another

moment Smith pulled the trigger, the white figure flung up its arms, and, with a groan, dropped dead.

Smith rushed up, and found, to his horror, it was no ghost he had shot, but a poor fellow, a bricklayer, who wore a white dress of the kind usually worn by men of that trade in those times, and who had only left his father's house a few minutes previously. He at once ran for assistance, but it was useless, and at the coroner's inquest his act was adjudged wilful murder.

He was sent for trial at the Old Bailey, and the Lord Chief Baron and two Judges severally expressed their opinion that the case proved amounted to murder, and that if a man killed another by design, without authority, but from a supposition that he ought to be killed, the offence amounted to murder.

The prisoner, I read, "was dressed in a suit of black clothes, was twenty-nine years of age, a short but well-made man, with dark hair and eyebrows; and the pallid hue of his countenance during the whole trial, together with all the signs of contrition which he exhibited, commanded the sympathy of every spectator." The Jury found him guilty but strongly recommended him to mercy, and the Lord Chief Baron, having put on the black cap and passed the death sentence, lost such a little time in communicating with his majesty that a respite arrived before seven that evening, and in another twelve days the prisoner "received a pardon on condition of his being imprisoned one year."

Meanwhile the frisky young gentleman whose tricks had caused so much unnecessary misery gave up his little game, and the Hammersmith Ghost was laid for ever.

* * * * *

The silvery tones of the young and melodious voice that had been reading this narrative here ceased, and the marble-browed boy who had been listening thoughtfully took up the poker and broke all the big lumps in what was left of the last quarter hundred his mother had anon sent him forth to fetch with a portion of the trifle that a long and laborious day's washing had brought her.

"Alexandry," he murmured, "we could frighten that gal Evelina into fits if we rigged up a skelliting out of a half quartern loaf, with holes in it blackened inside with a burnt stick to make hideous hollow eye sockets, and teeth cut out of a turnip, and my mother's Sunday-out dress-improver for the ribs, and put it in bed, and, when she went to turn the clothes down, made it jump up with a wire and clutch her in its icy clutch."

"There is an extry half quartern in the larder," said Alexandry.

(Next week a rather curious one.)

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

*** Owing to the demand on our space, we cannot guarantee to answer Correspondents immediately on the receipt of their Queries—particularly the queerest.

S. E. CUDDY (Mansfield)—*Certainly;* ALLY *thinks the police should have revolvers.*——SCHOOLBOY.—*If you really want to know, "Snatcher" originally came from the Dogs' Home at Battersea.*——E. H. R. B. (Homerton).—*'Tis "the missing link," and no mistake.*——ANON.—*We do not insert advertisements in the ordinary weekly issue of the "Half-Holiday."*——J. P (Adlington).—*Sorry we have no room.*——D. J. MUIRHEAD (Highgate).—*Of course you are right; the mistake is accounted for by its being a "wheeze" of* ALLY'S.——J. A. C.—*The Eminent is greatly flattered by your affection.*——OCKARD (Billington).—*Do you mean "The Charge of the Light Brigade?"*——P. PERKINS—*Alexandry's love, and he'll tell Poor Pa.*——TOM TOUGH (H. M. S. *Pembroke*, Chatham).—ALLY *wishes he* could *stand for your town. There are no class of men on earth he believes in more than the men of the British Navy.*——WALTER R. HENDERSON (Edinburgh).—*Verses most excellent; unfortunately crowded out.*——J. M. BRUNTON (Heeley).—*Very funny indeed.*——"TOUCAN" (Russell Square).—*Your invitation for Tootsie to fly with you to St. John's Wood is peculiar, to say the least. Are you a married man, sir?*——J. GIDDENS (West Kensington).—*In reply to your question, the Eminent is dead against Sunday closing.* Rather!!!——ANON.—*You are quite right about wives. As you say, "without a wife, who can one kick?"*——E. N. (Chiswick)—ALLY *never was good at "arithmetic."*—ELLEN TERRY (R. C. P. Brighton).—ALLY'S *love, and he will certainly bring in a Bill for poll taxing or polecoxing all old bachelors. It will become a great source of revenue to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (I Moses)*——ANON—ALLY *is a very religious man, and objects to jokes on the subject.*——S JAYERS.—*A very clever sketch.*——WALLACE PARRY (Snaresbrook).—*The Eminent had a gay old time with the servants at the Guildhall on Lord Mayor's Day.*——A. LEM (Birmingham)—*Very prettily coloured, but we cannot make you F.O.S. for that.*——BUMPUS (Dalston)—*Very good, but we've no room*——E T. LAWRENCE (Glasgow)—*What's "Another Ride for Randy" got to do with it? Pray explain.*——DOOK SLIME (Swansea)—ALLY *is an excellent Football Player, as everyone knows; he's a little "forward"*——E JOHNSON—*The passage you mark in the* East Anglian Daily Times *does not in any way refer to the Eminent*——YOUNG TEIGNMOUTH.—*Ta ta, dear boy; we will see you later.*——AN ADMIRER OF TOOTSIE—*All right, old man; cheer up.*

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And the "SLOPER AWARD OF MERIT," *will be given for the best 4-line Verse, wishing your old friend,* ALLY SLOPER, M.P.,

A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

As the Eminent feels certain that this must necessarily be the most popular of any of his Prize Competitions, it is earnestly requested by him that each Letter or Post-Card bearing on the subject be addressed—

A. SLOPER, FATHER CHRISTMAS,
"THE SLOPERIES,"
99 Shoe Lane, London, E.C.

*** *By Special Request the List will be kept open until Boxing Night.*

JUMBLES AND GINGERBREAD.

THE working man is looking up in the world. We need no further proof of this fact than is obtained by a letter which appeared in one of our daily contemporaries a few days back. It concluded as follows:—"I enclose my card, and remain, yours, &c., A Working Man." The same individual is now making arrangements for a splendidly elaborated card case.

***

THE bow-wow dog may be known by his bark, but you ought to let him bite you also, to properly impress it on your memory and your leg. There are all kinds of dogs: sly dogs (generally grey and baldish), sad dogs who are jolly, and jolly dogs whom it makes you sad to meet. Raw dog, even with a muzzle on, whilst walking about is preferable for companionship to cooked dog; but as an article of food, raw dog is hardly anything to speak of without ketchup or caper-sauce.

***

A PUBLICAN having objected to the apppearance of a half-sovereign tendered him by a customer, crushed it between his teeth and rejected it as spurious. The customer stated that he had frequently seen a threepenny bit and a fourpenny bit, but was quite unprepared to see a half-sovereign bit; and having proved that the coin was good, invoked the aid of a police magistrate, who decided that the biter for his bit of biting should pay the bitter penalty of retaining the bitten bit of money, hand over half-a-crown to the complainant, and bridle his propensities in future for chawing up Her Majesty's likeness.

FASHION FANCIES. By Miss Sloper. No. 87.—"The Christmas Holidays" Costume.

A Dook Snookal Crown, On a Dook Snookal Clown.

Then they had words which was very wrong at this gay and festive season. But you know, they were so young and inexperienced.

BOXING NIGHT.—DOING IT 'ANDSOME.

He doesn't know why, but somehow don't seem to care for Christmas like he used to years ago.

EASTCHEAP (London).—Slaves used to be sold here, and the constant use of the words "*She's cheap,*" or "*He's cheap,*" gave the idea for the name.

A DEVOTED couple determined to drown themselves; but to take one's own life is wicked, so they agreed that at night they should stand on the parapet of a bridge, and simultaneously give each other a good shove. They therefore stood up and shoved, and the young woman went into the water and was drowned; but the young man fell backwards on the bridge, and when he recovered himself, he saw that if he went on further with the business the crime of self-murder would rest upon his soul. So he went home instead and went to bed, and presently the police fetched him, and he has since been hanged.

***

THE subtle oyster, crouched within his shell,
Gustatious joy to many a household brings;
His tuneful notes with music's magic swell
In gentle cadence, as his song he sings,
"Whistle, and I'll come to you,"—that's his lay—
Or, sadder strain,—"It is our op'ning day."

***

CHRISTMAS comes but once a year, and a Christmas pudding comes to several shillings if you're not shabby. Some people feel more genial at Christmas-time; doctors generally feel more pulses. Persons who publish Christmas annuals are of opinion Christmas ought to be kept up twice a year, if possible. Most genial Christmas literature about red berries, snow, and crackling Yule logs is written in the Dog Days.

***

THE Goosey Gander is a strange fish, with a propensity to wander upstairs and downstairs, if we may accept the statement of the historian. The goosey gander can sit, stand on one leg, and do several other things; but it hasn't been the custom to take him as a model of wisdom. You may take a little of him for dinner, though, if you like, and a lot if you want to be ill. Yet the goosey gander is not altogether a fool. There is something of the sage about him, and something more of the onion, and apple sauce is a great improvement. No tailor is half a ninth part without his goose, and it is generally present upon the first night of any new and original drama. The child of the goose is called a gosling. This fact has been inserted here, as A. SLOPER is desirous of imparting as much useful information as possible to the reckless purchaser, at the low charge of one penny.

***

CATS are sly: so are girls. There was once a cat who was not sly, but there has never been a girl who was not very sly indeed. Cats purr, so do girls; A. Sloper pur-furs the latter. Cats like to be scratched under the chin, but many girls do not care for it, and speak to their mammas, or call a policeman. Cats don't like wet, no more do girls if their boot-heels are not all right. There are Tom Cats, and other cats; and Tom-Boys, and Tom-Gurls.

***

SERIOUS apprehensions have been felt during the last few months relative to the other end of the worm SLOPER failed to pull up in his garden. Happily, he is now in a position to state that all difficulties are at an end. A correspondent writing from Newcastle, Australia, says:—"I have much pleasure in informing you that the other end of your worm has just been discovered twisted round the stump of a tree growing in these parts. Pull at your end, and it will be all right." This information is most gratifying, and A. SLOPER has only to regret that the letter containing it was not prepaid.

***

A DREADFUL discovery was made early last year in London. The carcases of sheep supplied to a workhouse had been for some time past sent in with their heads on, so as to insure that the mutton was Southdown. One day, however, one of the sheep thus supplied looked almost too Southdowny, and the authorities had its face washed. The head of the animal was afterwards exhibited to the Board of Guardians, and excited profound indignation—it had been painted! Persons of an artistic turn may possibly profit by this anecdote.

***

A GOOD hen never lies. She lays or sits, and when she is tired, and wants to go to sleep, she stands on a perch on one leg. There is a time when you have to set your hens, but you don't do it with a spade or a dibble, only over eggs. When A. SLOPER first had a sitting hen, he set her, according to instructions, over an egg he had given to him for the purpose. That hen sat upon that egg for twenty days and a half, and then it began to think it useless, and retired. Not being of a wasteful turn, A. SLOPER then boiled the egg, and, pegging away at one end with a metal spoon, found it to emit an unusual sound. It was what is called a "nest egg" made of earthenware. This was almost like putting the pot on to A. SLOPER.

***

"SAY, dearest, why that troubled look?
Whence comes that deep-drawn sigh?
Speak, husband, tell me what doth bring
That tear-drop to thine eye?"

"Ah, Janet, love, you well may ask
What secret pain I feel,
And what it is that seems to pierce
My heart, like tempered steel.

"It is not that my friends are false—
'Tis not the lack of gold;
No, darling, everything is bright,
And prosperous as of old.

"But anguish may be felt as keen
Elsewhere than in the heart;
For instance, when one burns the tongue
Whilst eating currant tart!"

***

AN Irish lady excused herself for undue festivity on the ground that the Prince of Wales walked into the public-house in Smithfield where she was refreshing, and asked her what she'd have to drink. "So I had some more, yer washup, begorra, just to show me loyalty." The magistrate to whom she made the explanation, informed her that loyalty was sometimes an expensive luxury; but she would only have to pay five shillings for indulging in it this time.

***

WE sympathize with the American blondes, and refuse to believe that they are a whit less amiable than their brunette sisters, though of course we look at the matter through British spectacles. Why, only the other day we saw a stout gentleman drop an alcoholic diamond out of his dexter eye on to the floor of a suburban post-office, because an irritable little brunette flicked the post-card he had hesitatingly asked for into his amber optic. Then a dear little blonde clerk girl came forward, and in a sisterly manner offered the aggrieved one the use of her lace-edged pocket-handkerchief, and soothed him with a sympathetic smile. The scene was truly touching.

***

WHEN Napoleon I. settled himself down in Egypt, with the intention of making it a French colony, he sent to Paris the following interesting list of "importations" for his new conquest:—"First, a company of actors; secondly, a company of dancers; thirdly, some dealers in toys; fourthly, a hundred women; fifthly, the wives of all the men employed in the corps; sixthly, twenty surgeons, thirty apothecaries, and ten physicians; seventhly, some founders; eighthly, some distillers and dealers in liquor; ninthly, fifty gardeners, with their families, and the seeds of every kind of vegetable; tenthly, *each party to bring with them two hundred thousand quarts of brandy;* eleventhly, thirty thousand ells of blue and scarlet cloth; twelfthly, a supply of soap and oil." "Our Only General" would object to the advantage of the tenth item.

***

NOT a few dyspeptics envy that joyous but poverty-stricken madman, who was recently charged with wandering at large about F——. The restive lunatic, having been carefully examined by a doctor, was promptly pronounced to be "in the 'happy' stage, contented with everything and everybody, and therefore decidedly a fit subject for an asylum." We cordially agree with the doctor that such a state of mundane felicity is a certain sign of insanity. Yet the old adage, "Contentment is better than wealth," can be truthfully applied in the case of this impecunious but blissful lunatic, as he will be comfortably provided for during the whole of the time that he imagines he is in a position to "make everybody a lord," and feels positive that his large fortune will enable him to "make a present of three thousand pounds to the parsons, and a million to the bishops."

TOOTSIE ON BOXING DAY.

I MUST say I like Christmas.

All well-regulated girls ought to. There's so much to like. There are the presents fellows must give you, and the good things, and the champagne, and the mistletoe, and the innocent sports of childhood,

The Family Box.

"Honey Pots," "Here we go round the Mulberry Bush," "Puss in the Corner," "Blind Man's Buff," "Leap-Fr——," no I don't mean that, forfeits I was going to say, and "Hunt the Slipper." "Hunt the Slipper" is rather a funny game.

Until last year, I used every Christmas to be hard at work at some theatre or other; but, most of the time since, I've been betrothed, so of course, I have been resting. When I was quite a little toddles, I first went on as a carrot, and a potato trod on my toe, and I stuck a pin in her through an eye at the back, and she squeaked "Oh!" and the stage manag-r gave her what for, and she said it was me; and I said, "Oh, you great, big story!" and the acting-manager didn't believe her, and gave me a peppermint drop, so that's all she got. There!

The Dook's Christmas-boxes.

I don't know, of course, what this Boxing Day may be like, but I remember very well the last one. Lord Bob asked me out to dinner, and I said, perhaps, he had better ask the Dook and Billy, whom strange to say, we met outside the Café Royal, looking very blue and hungry; and they had bitters while the soup was preparing, only it came a moment after the waiter gave them the bitters, so Lord Bob sent the soup back and said we would have some *hors d'oeuvres*, and they brought olives, and sardines, and Lyons sausage, and the Dook and Billy ate such a lot, they seemed quite surprised when the soup came back again, and afterwards the poor Dook said, seeing the soup go away, he supposed as those things came instead of it, they had got to make their dinner off them.

I really never shall forget poor Billy's expression, when, after the soup, fish, and an entrée, another dish turned up and he couldn't touch it. After dinner, Bob took us to a box at a transpontine theatre to see a pantomime, and then Billy would go behind the scenes to talk to a fairy, and somehow he "took a wrong turning," as he said, and all in a minute he found himself in the middle of a "rally and pelt," and he got an awful dab in the eye with a property fish. The poor Dook is not at all in his usual spirits. He says, of course, nobody has sent him any rent, but he cannot show his nose outside his chambers without all the butchers, bakers, and candlestick makers falling on to him tooth and nail for Christmas boxes, and even the policeman for "Seeing you grace home a' nights, and taking care of you, a picking up your hat, and wiping the mud off when your grace is on the off squiffy"

[Billy's Pantomime Rally.

THE HIT OF THE SEASON!!!

ALLY SLOPER'S CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS

TWOPENCE; POST-FREE, 3d.

Containing Sixteen Large Pages full of Pictures and Reading, bearing on

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A 25:5:0 PRIZE,

And a long account of Ally's Evening Party by

MISS TOOTSIE SLOPER.

"THE SLOPERIES," 99 SHOE LANE, LONDON, E.C.

CHRISTMAS.

'Tis Christmas-time; the coal fire brightly burns;
The curtains closed shut out the freezing blast;
Each from his thoughts dull care and sadness spurns,
And the short hours in cheerfulness are passed.

Has Christmas faded? Are his glories spent?
Are wrinkles mark'd upon his pleasant brow?
Is he with sob'rer pleasures now content?
Sparkle his mirth and humour rarely now?

'Tis true the log no longer blazes bright,
Or casts its glow upon the gay deck'd hall;
No longer sound the screams of wild delight,
That marked the progress of the masque or ball.

Yet say not faded, if that sever'd friends
Are brought together at this holy tide;
If that the injured one his hand extends,
And bids the injurer sit by his side.

If that the rich their brethren poor relieve,
And those who lack the means possess the will;
If wounded hearts sweet words of peace receive,
Christmas has done his work—God bless him still!

PEOPLE WE DON'T WANT TO MEET AT CHRISTMAS PARTIES.

OUR tailor.

The man who reads all the annuals and publicly digests them to the company.

Poets who always send us verses for "ALLY SLOPER'S CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS," which we never insert.

The lady who answers puzzles in the papers, and worries us for information.

The man who says, "Christmas is played out, sir."

The party who wonders where we shall all be next Christmas.

The man who wants old-fashioned Christmas weather.

The old boy who can tell us what weather we have had every Christmas for the last fifty years.

The lady who can sing and *won't*.

The man who can't sing and *will*.

The man who says he never eats plum-pudding and consumes enough for four.

The boy who beats him by eating enough for five.

The funny man who digs us in the ribs every time we look hard at the young lady opposite because the footman behind her is *so* awkward.

The old lady who takes a 'bus to the corner, is set down at a wrong turning, and takes a cab to the house, has an altercation with the cabman, makes her entry in the dining-room with the sweets, and "slangs" the cabby and the 'bus conductor till the ladies leave the table.

The practical man who reminds us that bills come in after Christmas, and that the doctor is often sent for next day.

QUERIES FOR SLOPER.

SUGGESTED ON SEEING HIS KALENDAR FOR 1886.

TELL me, ALLY, seer and prophet,
Tell me, SLOPER, now M.P.,
Will that dear girl, Lucy Moffatt,
Ever be less cruel to me?

Tell me, shall I e'er be wealthy?
Will a latch-key e'er be mine
Will my aunt continue healthy?
Will her heart towards me incline?

Shall I ever get "moustaches?"
Will my whiskers ever grow?
Shall I know what lots of cash is?
Will my life be "fast" or slow?

Shall I ever pass through marriage?
Shall I have a son and heir?
Shall I ever keep my carriage?
Shall I ever be Lord Mayor?

Tell me, in your next edition,
All these things I want to know,
And it shall be my ambition
You to "puff" where'er I go?

The Prophet's answer—"Not for SLOPER."

PRIZE COMPETITION.

"SLOPER UMBRELLA FUND."

£21:1:0 *and the* **"SLOPER AWARD OF MERIT"** *has been presented to*

S. HUMPHREYS, 188 Richmond Road, Liverpool,

for the best Suggestion (printed hereunder) as to how the money collected, amounting to £0 7s. 6½d., should be expended.

CHRISTMAS DAY.

WHEN ALLY'S parachute was missing,
Consternation seized us all;
SLOPER, minus his companion,
From his dignity must fall.

But since we know his ancient gingham
Is safe within its native hall,
To Tootsie, grant the Dook's subscription
For a new "Spring" parasol.

NOTE.—*Just as we are going to Press we have received 3d. from Darkeyed Lucie, and 1d. from G. A. Being Christmas the Eminent has asked the chucker at the Moocher Arms what he'll take.*

CHARLOTTE THE WIFE.

You say that I am low. Well, I deserve it. I see life through the tap-room window. I am not an artist. I take a sight at you, and shall tell my story my own way.

Charlotte Anne stood over the washtub. Why should she not have stood over it? Well, if she had sat down in it, it would have been unpleasant.

Charlotte Anne.

Charlotte Anne was married. You could tell that by the plain gold hoop which she always wore on her finger. Yet she was singing over the washtub! She was a good woman, and why should she not have sung?

"Ah, Joe, Joe!" she said aloud, when she had finished the last mirthful stanza of "Over the Garden Wall," "how I love you', Joe!"

And she had reason to be proud of Joe. He was but a cats'-meat dealer, but even that is a calling which has its higher aims.

Theirs was a happy life. They felt that if was useful. Charlotte Anne would look out of the window in the morning as Joe went his rounds. She could see the cats looking out between the area railings; she could see their tails curling upwards to the skies like a sort of thankful incense.

She was angered if any one attacked these cats. But there was one who attacked both her and the cats. Martha Slapson once stuck a hair pin in a favourite tab that she noticed in the street. Martha Slapson also smiled on her husband Joe. Joe looked at her, and, as he blushed, trod on a cat's tail that was smelling at his basket of skewered meat.

They were washing at the baths in Endell Street.

"I seed your 'usband coming along this morning," said Martha, with an evil sneer, "he sed, 'you're lookin' 'ansom', Martha.'"

The wife's heart sank within her, and there was naught near to drink.

"I seed 'im; he didn't exactly wink, but he smiled most pleasant."

Then Charlotte Anne felt the hot blood mount to her cheeks.

"He trodded on one o' them there cats' tails." The serpent woman laughed like a fiend.

This was too much even for her meek, tamed spirit. As she heard the other women laugh in chorus, she seized hold of a flat iron. If she had murdered them would you have blamed her?

But they seized her and took the flat iron from her.

"Spiteful brute," they said, as they beat her with a bar of mottled and rubbed her nose with the blue-bag.

She sat up and burst into tears. Even the angels have their faults sometimes.

Ah, me! She saw, too, that Joe no longer loved the cats as he ought to have done. He did not boil the meat so carefully. He never polished the skewers on his trousers. One day he was in the backyard.

Some one was talking to Joe.

"Wouldn't they make lovely extracts, and essences, and that, of meat," said the man as he gazed; "a dozen of them would be worth a sovereign to me."

"But if I killed them there cats," was the answer, "there wouldn't be no meat bought, and my trade would be coopered up."

"But 'ow about the cats as 'as no homes, and that the meat always fetches, so that they follers yer wherever yer goes? Couldn't you have a pal with a truck? Couldn't you slip a few in a bag? Think o' the quids as might be made."

She listened to this, and laid her hand upon her heart. That Joe should ever be false to the cause! But would he be tempted?

One day he started out; his cheek was flushed, his hand was shaking. "I shall be back soon, old woman," he said.

There was something evil in the air. She followed him out. In the Brixton Road the trams were jingling by. Martha Slapson came from one. Her husband entered a tavern, Martha entered after. Charlotte Anne slipped into the next compartment. Charlotte Anne listened.

"Thirty cats yesterday," she said. "We shall make our fortunes, Joe; and you shall run off with me to Ameriky."

Faithless alike to her and to the cats!

Charlotte Anne was at home, and was sitting listening to the cats who were in the back yard.

"Them cats—that Martha—Joe!" She wiped her trembling lips with her shawl, and went out in the streets. * * *

In the morning a woman was found lying on her face on the pavement. The butcher boys smiled at the housemaids; the husband was going to the City on the omnibus; the baby was being tubbed; the child had its first morning spank.

"—— was lying on the pavement," so it was said afterwards.

And Joe passed by, singing merrily.

Joe is now an American General. We saw Martha Slapson the other day in Paris. She is now Mrs. General Joe.

Joe.

Some one accidentally said "Cats" as we were talking over the table *à la Russe*. She blushed through her rouge, and the diamonds shook in her ears. The meat is largely advertised.

In a quiet corner of the garden of the Brown Institution is a tablet; on the tablet is the simple word "Martha."

We are no better than the rest of the world.

THE MISTLETOE SEASON.

Fair Maiden. Oh, no, Captain, I cannot sit there It would look so very pointed.

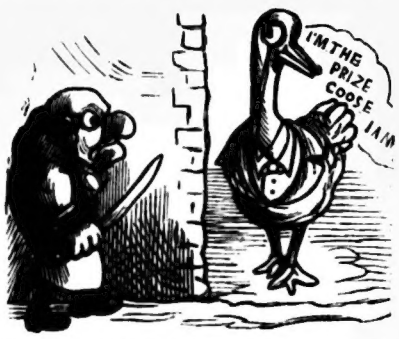
[*The Captain, who is awfully short-sighted, cannot make out what on earth she means.*

The cause of joy and sorrow, meanness, and [self-abasement at this merry time of year.

The Eminent, *carried away* by the unprecedented success of his "CHRISTMAS HOLIDAYS," kisses the Bobby Peeler on duty near "The Sloperies."

BOXING NIGHT AT DRURY LANE.

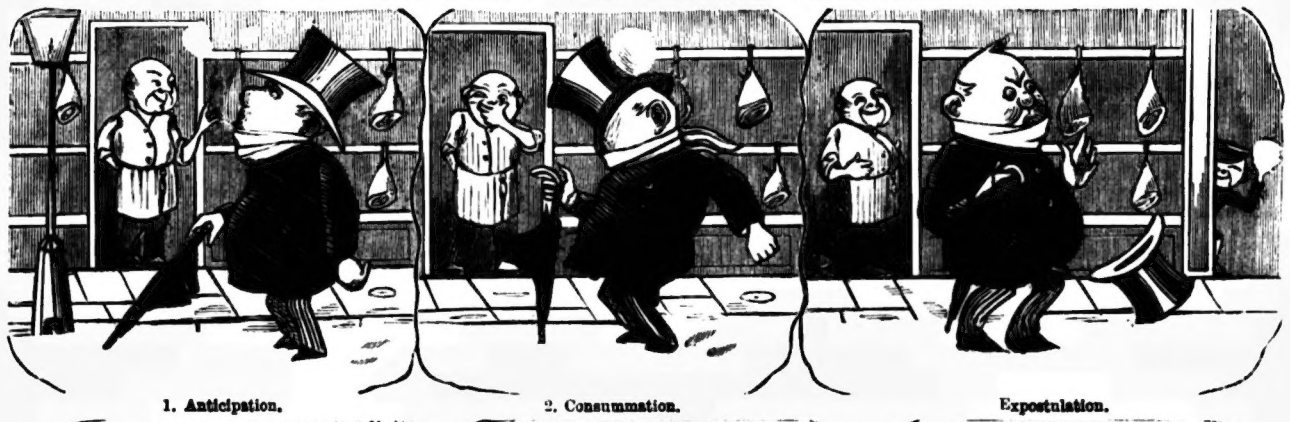
"Somebody's luggage"—Harry Payne's, perhaps.



AWFUL TRAGEDY ON CHRISTMAS MORNING.

An absurdly conceited prize goose goes about bragging of his plumpness—the silly old noodle!

THAT SNOWBALL. A BOXING DAY REMINISCENCE.



1. Anticipation. 2. Consummation. Expostulation.

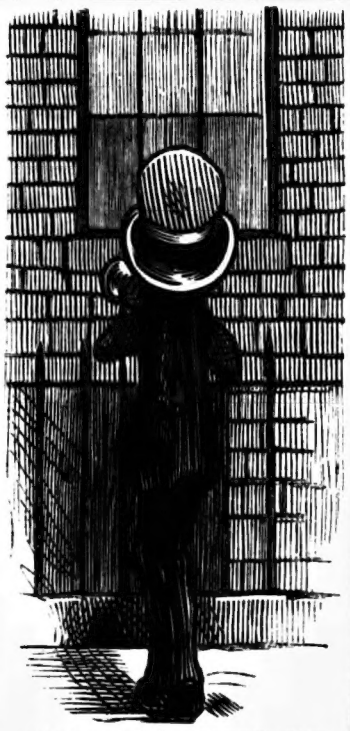
Inflammation. 5. Indignation. 6. Whackification.

MORE CHRISTMAS PUDDING.

Tommy. Please, mamma, may I have some more pudding?

Mamma. No, Tommy; I think you have had quite sufficient. You know if you want to be healthy and strong you should never eat as much as you can, but you should stop when you can eat a bit more.

Tommy. Yes, ma, I know that, and I want to see if I can eat a bit more now!



This is a gentle Tootletummist, whose heart's idol lived in Pimlico, and he went and serenaded in the wrong street on Christmas Eve. Poor old Tootletummist!

A CRUEL SUPPOSITION.

'Bus Conductor to Driver. Hold on, can't yer? Do yer s'pose I've got a load o' hackerybacks a-goin to the pankymine?

RAILWAY OFFICIALS AT IT AGAIN.

Ticket Collector. Show your ticket, please.

Countryman (on the way to Lunnon for his Christmas holidays) What should I do that for, my lad? Do you think I don't know where I'm going to? I suppose I can read as well as you!

AN AUTHORITY.

(Time—Christmas morning.)

Page. The Doctor will be disengaged in a few moments. Er—what's the matter with you?

Patient. I have no appetite. *Page.* That's bad!

AWKWARD FOR UNCLE TIMBERTOSE.

1. Uncle Timbertose had been asked to a Fancy Dress Ball, and he had got his costume all right, and was only waiting for half a pair of shoes he had ordered.——2. Presently a parcel came. Excitement of Uncle T.——3. Curiosity of the Domestic Division.——4. "Won't he look pretty when he gets this on!"——5. "Wants a bit of a polish."——6. Crikey!"——7. "Won't I ketch it!"——8. "Suppose I put it in the oven, and watch it doesn't burn."——9. "It won't hurt while I go out and have a slide."——10. Didn't it, though!—Whacks!

YE ARTFUL ONE.—AN INCIDENT OF YE FIFTEENTH CENTURY.

1. Ye Annual Christmas Fair being held in ye Maypole Green. John, of ye Pig and Whistle, may be seen wending his way to ye gay and festive scene with a barrel of his good brown ale.

2. All ye fun of ye fair is on—ye Merry-Andrew, ye seller of gingerbread nuts, ye show, and I know not what.

3. So John, thinking to do a good trade, taketh his stand, and offereth his good ale to ye thirsty ones at a reasonable figure.

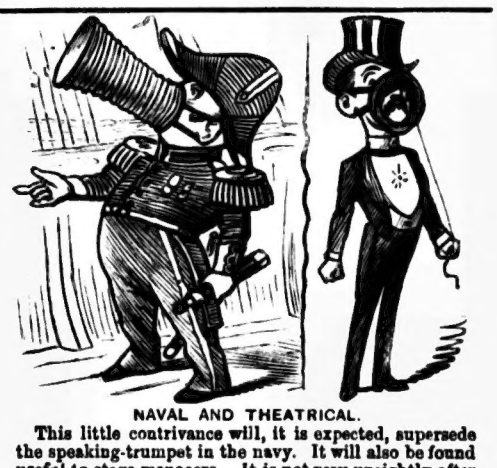
4. But one artful cuss, his rival, of ye Flea and Elephant, taketh a mean advantage of John by driving a tap into ye back of John's barrel—

5. And doth a roaring trade.

6. Eventually John, who hath but sold one half-pint, findeth his barrel run out. His astonishment!

7. Meantime, ye artful one bolteth with ye good round sum he hath made by ye affair.

8. Rage of John on finding he hath been done.



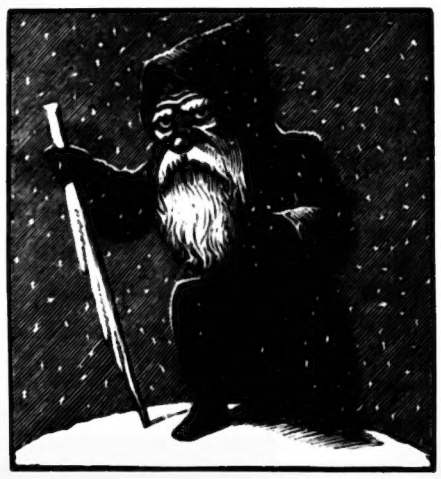
NAVAL AND THEATRICAL.

This little contrivance will, it is expected, supersede the speaking-trumpet in the navy. It will also be found useful to stage-managers. It is not very unsightly after all when closed, is it now?

Pretty Kate—See her skate.

ALLY-OAMPANE.

By the way, perhaps you mayn't have heard anybody allude to it before, but I am informed that Mr. Sinkins has just published an extra double number, price twopence, under the title of "Ally Sloper's Christmas Holidays." It appears to me rather odd that I should be compelled to mention this fact, but the Under-Half Office Boy says he really don't quit understand why I am allowed to loaf around this office, wearing the counters out with my elbows, waiting for something on account of the next week but two's profits, unless I mess about now and then with a drop of ink, only I needn't take the pen away. It is a pleasant and soothing thing to feel one's self so much at home, and unlooked to on one's own paper.



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Wurts and wurts! A brewer in Ohio, said to carry on the largest trade in the State, has incorporated a brewing company with a capital of £160,000, and has distributed one half of the shares gratuitously among his workmen. The brewery is said to be worth £300,000; and it is explained that the owner, hearing that he would not long live to enjoy his wealth, has taken this method of dividing it among those who helped him to accumulate it. The eminent, in the words of an old song, often wishes he were—

A brewer's horse when the brewer wasn't near,
To put his head where his tail ought to be, and drink up all the beer.

***

We have had a lot of Fausts from time to time, and several Mephistopheleses; but this time, at the Lyceum, our Henry is that most popular of all bad spirits, and any one better qualified (on the stage, of course) for the part it would be difficult to imagine. In a melodrama by Bouchault, called *Faust and Marguerite*, the late Charles Kean made one of his biggest hits. *The* biggest hit he ever made was Irving's favourite character, Louis XI.

***

For years the current of Mongolian immigration has been streaming into San Francisco, until the Celestials have become an intolerable nuisance, and formed in the fairest and best part of the city the rankest growth of human degradation to be found in the American continent, or, indeed, in the world. The supervisor's exhaustive report shows that, compared with Chinatown, the filthiest and rottenest rookery in London is a model dwelling. Pictures of pallid wretchedness unparalleled in the whole range of human depravity; human beings huddled and herded together indiscriminately, without any attempt at family classification, women of the most depraved type intermingling with and corrupting children and youths, and gambling hells, which are fortresses that defy the law, are the disgusting features of John Chinaman's quarters. Municipal injunctions are nullified, the laws are not only set aside, but are invoked to shield and to foster crime and vice. Every accepted rule of hygiene is violated; immorality is deified. Men are debauched, the labouring classes deprived of work and impoverished, children are brought up in the school of "hoodlumism" and utterly lost. The people, in fact, live like vermin, and the sewerage abominations and noxious exhalations make the place an inviting field for cholera and other epidemics. The intermingling of different odours produces a state of things "indescribable and unknowable," which can neither be imagined nor described. The atmosphere is not only disagreeably tangible to the sense of smell, but also tangible to the sight, touch, and taste. Yet amidst his squalid and wretched surroundings, John Chinaman is perfectly happy, and spends most of his time in consuming opium and in enjoying the delicious stupefaction that follows the consumption thereof. Beds are unknown in Chinatown. The Orientals are a "bunking" people. Women and children and everybody else stow themselves away in every available nook and corner. Marriage is at a discount—as may be imagined under such circumstances. All the population (30,360), however, do not spend their time in luxurious idleness or abject debauchery and corruption. A certain number work—make clothing, boots, cigars, &c.

***

Up to the time of going to press over 7,000 dogs had been "taken into custody" by the London police, in accordance with the new regulations. The accommodation provided at the Dogs' Home, Battersea, has been found totally inadequate, and it is now a serious question as to what will have to be done with the animals when captured. A large number are, of course, disposed of daily, being either sold or killed after three days, and thus room is made for fresh arrivals. Pity the poor outcast dogs. On the 10th instant the fiat went forth, and our noble friend was doomed to perpetual persecution. The Family are almost broken-hearted at having to muzzle their pet and darling "Snatcher." As for the Eminent, ever since that memorable day he has done nothing but imbibe large quantities of "unsweetened" (much against his will, as he says), to drown his terrible sorrow at having to act so cruelly to so noble an animal. There is weeping and gnashing of teeth throughout Shoe Lane.

***

Through the courtesy of Miss Emily Hodson, the Eminent recently received a ticket for a *matinée* at the Vaudeville for the benefit of St. Mark's Hospital, City Road. Through the enormous pressure of business brought about by the unprecedented success of his "Christmas Holidays" Ally was unable to be present.

Boxing Day, this year, falling on Saturday, it will be interesting to see what will be the effect on the receipts of the theatres. It is quite likely, too, that some of the harlequinades will run into the Sabbath. What will Mrs. Grundy say?

***

Pantomimes, according to Aunt Geeser, were representations by gesture and attitudes among the ancients, and were introduced on the Roman stage twenty-two years before the Christian era. Pantomime dances were also, she understands, introduced about the same time.

***

"Pants," on the authority of Lord Bob, is the American for *long drawers* worn underneath.

***

Every pantomime this year is going to be the best one. Take a note of this; but we may reasonably expect a show from Augustus Harris worth coming any distance to see.

***

The Customs' officers recently entered a shop kept by a tailor at Hull, and made a search which resulted in the discovery of 514 lbs. of tobacco. A subsequent search resulted in the further discovery of a woman's petticoat in which there were twenty-two pockets, each capable of holding 2 lbs. of tobacco, and it is supposed that the tobacco had been conveyed from a Hamburg steamer by this means.

***

Many of the railway companies seem resolved to destroy the eyesight of as many of their customers as possible. The lighting of certain of the Metropolitan trains is simply execrable. The Brighton Company has shown that with "block" trains, such as are run on all the underground services, an admirable electric light can be cheaply and easily used. If it is too much to expect the underground lines to adopt so good a system at once, at all events they might see that pure mineral-oil gas is supplied to their burners, and not seek to economize out of their customers' eyesight by burning a mixture largely diluted with common coal-gas.

***

A great portion of Mr. Vanderbilt's wealth (the well-known American owner of railways, and speculator in stocks, who died suddenly in New York, on the 8th inst.) has gone to his eldest son, Cornelius. Some years ago, Mr. Vanderbilt was certainly the richest man in the world. The exact amount he was worth was not, of course, known, but he said one day to a friend that his income in a recent year was twenty millions of dollars. Mr. Vanderbilt's chief amusements were horse-trotting and cards. The poor fellow only started in life with the trifling sum of £16,000,000, which his father left him.

***

What will the British Matron say when she finds that the "nude" has pursued her to Brighton? Her sufferings were sufficiently severe during the London season, when she was compelled to take her girls to the Academy and the Grosvenor, and where from some part or other of every room the unclothed presentment of her own sex stared down at her from the canvas, which she considered ought to have been in front of the pigments instead of at the back. But she is to have no peace, for "Nana" has found out that the British Matron has a liking for Brighton in December, so this damsel has established herself in snug quarters on the King's Road, where she receives her admirers, whose blushes are discreetly veiled by the intense darkness which prevails in her chamber, except where the rays of light are thrown up on her lovely form. But when the British Matron gets back to London, what further horrors are in store for her? Why, the paintings of Vereschagui are to be exhibited, and it will interest her to know, and make her blood run cold when she is told, that the Cardinal Archbishop of Vienna has recently solemnized an expiatory mass in the Cathedral of St. Stephen for the sin committed by their public exhibition in that city. Bond Street, both Old and New, will soon become a forbidden ground to the British Matron and her daughters, but there is always this consolation for the unhappy woman, that if she does not like to go and see these wonderful paintings, she can do the other thing, or stay at home and amuse herself with her looking glass.

***

At a private theatrical entertainment recently given in New York, "representatives of all the dead presidents" were present, and the ladies in the audience pelted with flowers the young man who played Iago.

***

Another Moonlighting outrage has taken place at Castleisland. Two policemen, who were on protection duty at the house of a man named O'Connor, at Couriquilla, found a party of armed men taking away two cows from the farm. The constables called to the men to lay down their arms, or they would fire upon them. The Moonlighters obeyed, and just as the police were in the act of stooping to gather up the weapons, a number of men rushed on them from behind, and overpowered them. The police struggled, but their efforts were powerless, and they were both injured by the violence of the mob. The Moonlighters then proceeded to deprive the police of their weapons, ammunition, and belts, and afterwards decamped. Information of the outrage was conveyed to the nearest police barracks, and reinforcements were sent to scour the county. Cars were also forwarded to bring back the injured constables. A butcher's knife and dagger were picked up at the scene of the outrage.

A CHRONICLE OF CURIOUS EVENTS.

A Calendar for the Week Ending January 2nd.

27th December, 1787.—The *Dublin Chronicle* of this date says:—"The practice of throwing snow-balls in the public streets is not less dangerous in its consequences than fatal in its effects, an instance of which occurred last Monday evening. A gentleman passing through Marylebone Lane was hit by a fellow in the face with a large snow-ball, upon which he immediately pulled out a pistol, pursued the man, and shot him dead. Those deluded people are therefore cautioned against such practices, as in similar circumstances they are liable, by Act of Parliament, to be shot, without any prosecution or damage accruing to the person who should fire."

27th December, 1821.—John Keats, the poet, died this day at Rome of consumption, in his twenty-sixth year, and was buried in the romantic and lovely cemetery of the Protestants of that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the mossy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

"Can death be sleep when life is but a dream,
And scenes of bliss pass as a phantom by?
The transient pleasures as a vision seem,
And yet we think the greatest pain's to die.

How strange it is that man on earth should roam
And lead a life of woe, but not forsake
His rugged path; nor dare he view alone
His future doom which is but to awake."

28th December, 1885.—Childermas Day. Children were formerly whipped on this day in order "that the memorial of Herod's murder of the Innocents might stick the closer, and so, in a moderate proportion, to act over the cruelties again in kinde." It was neither "lucky" on this day to be married, to put on new clothes, to pare the nails, or begin anything of moment. The coronation of King Edward IV. was, on account of this superstition, put off till the Monday, because the preceding Sunday was Childermas Day.

28th December, 1883.—About five hundred Parisian students met this day at the Salle de l'Ermitage, to consider what steps should be taken to obtain redress from the editor of *Le cri du Peuple* for an article insulting the student body. Four of the number were selected to demand from the editor of the paper reparation by arms. Some years ago a *submarine duel* occurred among the divers employed in clearing the wreck of the *Royal George* at Spithead. Two privates in the Sappers and Miners at work under water squabbled, and had a set to in the briny deep. One of them succeeded in breaking the glass in his antagonist's helmet, and the unfortunate diver was dragged up to the surface half drowned. This fight took place at Spithead 22nd September, 1842. The depth of the water was between fifteen and eighteen fathoms.

29th December, 1836.—Deborah Tripp, aged ten years and six months, died this day at Poughkeepsie, in the State of New York. She weighed 360 pounds. A few years before she and a younger sister were exhibited about the country for their extraordinary fatness. The younger sister died two or three years previously.

29th December, 1837.—The Imperial palace at St. Petersburg was this day destroyed by fire, the weather at the time being 22° below zero. The palace was built in the reign of Elizabeth, at an enormous cost, and was the largest in Europe, sufficient to lodge 12,000 persons. The loss of treasures, pictures, statues, ornaments and furniture was immense.

29th December, 1662. In Mr. Pepys' diary of this date we read: "To Westminster Hall where I heard not of before, the strange burning of Mr. De Laun, a merchant's house in Lothbury, and his lady (daughter of Sir Thomas Alleyne, Lord Mayor of London in 1660), and her whole family, not one thing, dog nor cat, escaping, nor any of the neighbours almost hearing of it till the house was quite down and burnt. How this should come to pass God knows, but a most strange thing it is!"

30th December, 1546.—Henry VIII. this day signed his last will and testament, before eleven witnesses. Testamentary arrangements of property were made in the earliest ages, and appear to be referred to by Moses, who states that Jacob bequeathed to Joseph a portion above his brethren. Richard II. made a will in 1399, which is regarded as the first royal will on record, though it is asserted that similar documents were prepared by previous sovereigns. The wills formerly kept in Doctors' Commons are now removed to Somerset House. The originals commence with the first year of Edward V. (1483). A century later copies of all wills were made on parchment and bound in volumes. At first a small volume would contain the wills of ten or more years, but now the wills proved in London alone average about 10,000 a year, and those registered in the District Courts are probably from 15,000 to 20,000 additional.

30th December, 1853.—The ship *Staffordshire*, Captain Richardson, from Liverpool to Boston, this day struck on a rock south of Seal Island and sunk, carrying down 177 of the passengers and crew.

31st December, 1761.—The following advertisement from the *Public Ledger* of this date will grate harshly upon the feelings of the present generation: "For Sale.—A healthy negro girl, aged about fifteen years; speaks good English, works at her needle, washes well, does household work, and has had the small-pox." Slaves or villeins were very numerous in England during the Anglo-Saxon period, when they enjoyed some sort of legal protection. If the master struck out the eye or tooth of a slave, he recovered his freedom, and if he killed him the murder was recompensed by a fine.

31st December, 1796.—The thermometer in London this day registered 4° below zero. Several persons were frozen to death. It is not known who invented the thermometer. It has been ascribed to Galileo, to Drebbel, to Paulo Sarpi, and to Sanctorio. Fahrenheit's thermometer was invented about 1710. In England the temperature is commonly denoted by the Fahrenheit scale; in France, by what is termed the centigrade. Réaumur's thermometer is little used, except in Germany.

1st January, 1801.—On this, the initial day of the nineteenth century, Ireland passed into an incorporating union with Great Britain, and the three kingdoms were thenceforth styled the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland. The expression, "Initial day of the nineteenth century," requires an explanation, for many persons regard the year 1800 as the beginning of the present century. The year 1801 is, in reality, entitled to the honour, because then only had the previous century been completed. To make this plain, let anyone reflect that it required the year 100 to complete the first century, the year 200 to complete the second century, and so on through all that followed. To say, then, that the year 1800 was the first of a new century, is to be led by sound, instead of fact.

1st January, 1731.—Edward Cave this day printed the first number of the well-known *Gentleman's Magazine*. In paragraph two of the Introduction we read:—"Upon calculating the Numbers of News-Papers, 'tis found that (besides divers written Accounts) no less than 200 Half-sheets per Month are thrown from the Press only in London, and about as many printed elsewhere in the three Kingdoms."

2nd January, 1774.—The coffin of Edward I. was this day opened by a deputation from the Society of Antiquarians, after it had been buried 467 years. The face had over it a silken covering, so fine, and so closely fitted to it, as to preserve the features entire. The feet enveloped in the mantle were sound, and the toes distinct. Its length was six feet two inches. The corpse was habited in a rich mantle of purple, lined with white, and adorned with ornaments of gilt metal, studded with red and blue stones and pearls. Round his temples was a gilt coronet of *fleur de lys*.

2nd January, 1756.—At four o'clock on the afternoon of this day an unusual light, far above that of the brightest day, was seen at Tuam, in Ireland. It then faded away by invisible degrees; but at seven, from west to east, "a sun of streamers" appeared across the sky. A general feeling of alarm was excited by this singular phenomenon. The streamers gradually became discoloured, and flashed away to the north, attended by a shock, which all felt, but which did no damage. The affair seems to have been an example of the aurora borealis, only singular in its being bright enough to tell upon the daylight.

AT THE PANTOMIME.

AN'T a pantomime
Be a subject for rhyme,
Now at Christmas time!
On a "children's night,"
The prettiest sight
You'll see in all the year.
For, search where you will,
Confess you must still,
You cannot find its peer.
The groups of children in each box,
With smiling looks and sunny locks,
Their glances bent,
With looks intent,
Upon the curtain green,
Expectant, hot,
They wonder what
Behind is to be seen.
Now, up it goes,
The stage then shows
A dismal demon scene.
The children fear
That demon drear,
They do not like his mien.
Soon off he limps
With all his imps,
Before the fairy good,
Who with a song
Rights ev'ry wrong,
As a good Fairy should,
Now we're convey'd to a beautiful valley
And introduced to a glittering ballet;
The children gaze without affright,
On beings looking light and bright:
Some day they will know
How hollow's the show—
That those beings, who look so light and airy,
Are ugly and old as cross Nurse Mary.
Spangles and paint make a wonderful show,
And—hush, sir!—all this in time they will know.

Let them enjoy,
As girl and boy,
What they'll soon enough learn to despise.
When the hero they get,
He becomes their great pet,
And they follow him so with their eyes!

When he fights the giant and cuts off his head,
And rescues the Princess fair,
The children all shout till their faces are red,
And applaud the happy pair.
The transformation's soon done and away,
And then there comes the real fun of the play.

Pantaloon and Clown
Trip up, tumble down,
Prig things, knock at doors,
Smash hats, butter floors,
Kiss maids, take babies,
Kill cats, kick gabies,
Bonnet Bobbies passing near,
Seemingly devoid of fear.
And then the famous red-hot poker,
With which the Clown is such a joker.

But Columbine and Harlequin
Much allegiance do not win,
The children do not care a pin
For all their trips;
For Clown and Pantaloon they care,
Join in their joys, their troubles share,
Applaud everything they dare,
Grieve o'er their slips.

The fairy good.

The children grow sleepy, the pantomime's done,
Come, it's time to go home and so end the fun;
All their thoughts and their dreams of this one will be
Till Christmas next year brings another to see.

A CHRONICLE OF CRIME.

'Tis merry Christmas-time! The shops are gaily decorated. The bookstalls are bright with Christmas pictures. Everybody is rejoicing—everybody is wishing everybody else the compliments of the season. General jolliness prevails! Suppose I kill my uncle Jeremiah?

He is going, I know, to present a bill this afternoon at the house of a gentleman living in a lonely part of Hampstead. It will be dark when he returns. I will sharpen a knife and lay in wait for him.

* * * * * *

I did. Uncle Jeremiah has been much stuck. In his pocket was the bill; it had not been taken up. Otherwise he had eighteenpence on him.

'Tis merry Christmas-time, and the Yule log crackles. The Jenkinsons always spend their Christmas with the Simpsons, take the servant with them, and leave the house locked up. Why should not I break in and rob it? I will buy the necessary implements.

* * * * * *

I bought the implements, and hurt myself badly using them, but I broke in. I have since learnt that the Jenkinsons moved to a new house about three days ago. The place was quite empty. As I came out of the front door I noticed a bill with "house to let" stuck in the window.

Still 'tis merry Christmas-time. The welkin rings. I have just money enough for a first-class single to Liverpool.

* * * * * *

I settled him, and threw out his body. He had in his possession a brass watch-chain, fourpence-halfpenny, and a ticket to a soup kitchen.

Merry Christmas is not over yet. I am thinking of chucking up crime; it hardly pays.

THE EDITOR'S LETTER-BOX.

*** *In consequence of the enormous number of letters received, we are unable to publish those selected as soon as we could desire*

CHATHAM, 17*th December*, 1885.

DEAR MR. SLOPER,—If the photograph of dear Mrs S. (taken, presumably, by instantaneous process, when she was amongst the rioters at the "Sloperies," and published in your issue of the 5th inst.) is reliable, she is getting enormously like "Christmas Live Stock." My wife, who is dotingly fond of the dear old soul, is afraid she is dropsical, and has asked me to tell you that she has a friend who knows a *certain cure* for dropsy, and will obtain it if you promise her your "Award of Merit" (you need only promise).

I have told her she is more likely to get the award by getting her friend to keep the remedy dark (she says it is not gin), as I fancied you might like a change, but have written to enquire. Please reply at early convenience. Yours faithfully, WATER-ON-BRAIN.

N. B.—What an awkward position for the First Lord of the Admiralty, the Hon. Billy! What evidence for the Divorce Court! I wish I were you.

"LE SQUARE," le 17 *Déc.*, '85.

MON CHER MONSIEUR ALLY,—Depuis 8 days I am in Londres, and partout où I go, I hear spike seulement of you.

On m'a dit, and I not knoe if c'est vrai, that the décoration that you accord is the most recherché in England.

Now, cher monsieur. I am of Paris, du faubourg Montmartre, and very known comme orateur—some mauvaises langues say "blagueur;" but as my concitoyens are striked d'aveuglement, I not have encore the plaisir to can porter a ribbon à the boutonnière.

Cher Monsieur ALLY, you, who dites that you are the "Friend of Man," je vous supplie to well will m'accorder this distinction épatante, afin que, going back in la grande ville I puisse show to my concitoyens, that à Londres il y a un man enough just and impartial pour judge my mérites à leur just valour. Agréez, cher Mr. ALLY, the assurance of my consideration distinguished. JEAN CHARLATAN.

P.S.—Est ce vrai that Mlle. Tootsie is so jolie? Pourrais je la see? Must I come aux Sloperies afin that you puissiez me hear causer?

THE EDITOR, "A. S. H. H."

HASTINGS, *Dec.* 18, '85.

DEAR SIR,—We always look forward with great interest to the weekly issue of the "HALF-HOLIDAY." The Hon'ble Billy is our special delight, and we are all fairly "mashed" on him, and are consequently not at all surprised at the "Friv." girl being similarly affected. He looks so good-natured, and always is so well dressed (we admire him particularly in evening dress), and his plumpness is a pleasant contrast to the attenuated forms of The Dook and Lord Bob. How *can* Tootsie prefer the latter? We wish Billy would pay Hastings a visit, that we could manage to make his acquaintance somehow or other. For obvious reasons we do not give our full address, but perhaps some arrangement could be made through the medium of your paper, whereby we might make ourselves known to Billy. Tell him not to be afraid of us all wanting to take possession of him. We have made a rule that as soon as he shows a preference for one of us, the rest are to rise in a body and leave the pair in undisturbed bliss. We are very sorry Billy did not come down here instead of that ridiculous old ALLY, whom, however, we regret, for curiosity's sake, we did not see, but whose acquaintance we have no desire to make. It is no wonder Tootsie feels ashamed of her father. The possession of such a notoriously erratic parent will probably handicap her heavily in the matrimonial race. We girls also think that it was (to say the least) highly indiscreet of Tootsie going abroad, *entirely unchaperoned*, with three young men. Such a proceeding was not calculated to hurry on her marriage, even though Lord Bob was one of the party, as "well-regulated" men are generally averse to their future wives acting in such opposition to Mrs. Grundy. We like the look of Tootsie as she is represented in the "HALF-HOLIDAY," and are merely offering these remarks for her good, with a view to making her act more cautiously in the future, and be more careful to provide herself with a duenna when occasion requires one. Girls have to be very careful, and we are far too diplomatic to let our local Grundy know more about us than is absolutely necessary. Trusting you will excuse the length of this letter, and wishing your paper a continuation of the great success it enjoys and deserves believe us, dear Mr. Editor, yours very sincerely, SOME PRETTY HASTINGS GIRLS.

Will you give us a hint in your next issue as to whether there is a chance of Billy's coming down? The best time for Hastings is the present—till the spring.

SOUTH STREET, GREENWICH, 19*th December*, '85.

TO ALLY SLOPER, M.P., ESQ., LONDON.

SIR,—I completely endorse "A Radical's" letter, which appeared in a recent issue of your "HALF-HOLIDAY." I had the honour (or otherwise) of being one of the 16,000 odd (I haven't the exact figures by me just now) who voted in favour of your being returned as Radical Member for—anywhere.

The result of the Poll is now known to your readers. Now I think you will own that however popular the "HALF-HOLIDAY" is, it is not patronised to a very great extent by the "Nobility and Gentry," and I will give you an example why I think so. Let anyone go and visit a train on the eve of starting for, say—Timbuctoo, or any other place in Scotland, and count the number of "H.-H.'s" in the hands of the noble (!) occupants of each 1st class carriage, and he would be astonished at the result—not more than one copy in ten persons would be found. (If you don't believe it, try it.) But let him pass on to the 2nds and 3rds of the same train, and what does he see? Why, if he isn't knocked on his back, he sees that almost everyone has a "HALF HOLIDAY," and those who haven't wish they had. It is, therefore, fair to assume that the 2nds and 3rds monopolise it between them. That being so, it follows that the said 2nds and 3rds are mainly filled with Liberals (*i.e.*, the middle and lower classes, which, I think you will own, are Liberals, not necessarily in railway carriages only, but all over the country), and why you, *The* Eminent, should have been returned as a Tory is more than I can understand. You will say that, because a man belongs to the middle classes, that is no reason why he should be reckoned as a Liberal. Granted. There are exceptions, and I admit that there is such an institution as a Conservative working man, but I say that that only proves the rule. If *all* Liberals withdrew their custom from you where would you be? Answer: "Ask of the winds that far," etc., etc. So, therefore, dear ALLY, don't harp so much on politics, and I am sure that, in the long run, you will profit greatly by giving politics "to the dogs" altogether, to "good, thumping," hungry dogs, and cease prattling about the "three acres and a cow," as if the thing had really been said, and you will have the support and good wishes of yours, most sincerely,

ANOTHER RADICAL

P.S.—If you have room enough, you will greatly oblige by printing this (or part), and inviting discussion. A. R.

[NOTE.—*The Eminent is anxious to point out to his half million of readers that he has not the slightest intention of becoming a Political Character. Although the Public voted him in as a* "Little Conservative," *and he was elected without opposition, bar a few brickbats on the head, as Member for Shoe Lane, when he takes his seat in the House it will be more with the idea of furthering the interests of his* "HALF-HOLIDAY" *than joining in Party differences.*]

HUNDREDS AND THOUSANDS.

A MARRIED man of much experience speaks of ladies as the opposing sex instead of the opposite.

"THERE'S raison in everything," as Pat said of plum pudding.

"WHAT'S port to you is death to me," as the gouty man said to his son.

CHRISTMAS waits. No, it goes and comes again.

DES FEMMES SAVANTES.—Some men say that ladies look better in muslin than print.

WHAT is the best argument against young ladies standing up to play at cricket?—Because they never ought to be bowled.

WHAT bone is best developed in policemen?—The "collar"-bone.

FOUR FLIRTS.

THEIR CARDS, AND HOW THEY PLAYED THEM.

(Commenced in No. 54.)

THE QUEEN OF HEARTS.—*(Continued.)*

"DON'T you think we go very well in double harness?" he said, after a short interval

"Yes, so long as you do all the work," I replied.

"I'd do anything to please you, Miss Grahame. Oh! if we could only go through the world like this!"

"Towing a lot of people behind us! No, thank you, Sir Edgar."

Absorbed in each other's conversation.

"No, no, I did not mean that; I was thinking of something quite different. Look here! mayn't I call you Rosalind? Look here, Rosalind, some fellow talks about the river of life, and pulling against the stream and that; but a fellow with eight thousand a year, you know, can get another chap to pull for him, or can walk on the banks, can't he? I'd like to show you my little place in Worcestershire, you know, and if you'd only——"

"Hoy! Oi—oi—Stop!" chorused voices in the distance.

I confess I wondered at Edgar's fluency, considering the exertion he had to make to tow the two boats, but on looking back the cause was explained.

The tow-rope had broken, and we absorbed in each other's conversation, had walked two or three hundred yards pulling with praiseworthy energy at nothing, while the stream, having caught the boats, had drifted them some distance down the river before the occupants could get out the sculls.

It was most provoking, because I am sure an offer was coming the very next minute, and I *would* have liked to have found out whether I should have accepted him or not; but his sentimentalism was snapped off as short as the tow-line, and I could get no more from him as we strolled back than—

"Most s'tronary! most s'tronary thing I ever knew!"

However, I felt Edgar was hooked, though not landed, and I smiled pityingly on those in the boats, who loaded us with chaff, and that on the part of sister Anne of not too good-natured a kind; and we finished our afternoon's journey, Tom and Jack leisurely sculling my boat while I steered, Jack, who was pulling stroke, regarding me the while with such a ferocious expression as nearly to obliterate the good-natured smile that was habitual to him. I should have been quite angry with him only he was really such a nice fellow, and well-to-do also, though not as rich as Edgar, that I could not find it in my heart to be as chilly and haughty in my manner as I ought to have been; besides, we were neighbours, and neighbours ought not to quarrel.

The river-side inn where we remained for the night was one of the sweetest little spots imaginable, but we girls were so tired with our first day in the open air that we soon left the gentlemen to their own devices, and it was long after everybody ought to have been in bed and asleep that, hearing voices on the flower-decked lawn which sloped down to our "silent highway," I stole to the little window of my room, curtained with festoons of roses, and listened.

Very wrong, of course, but I am not the first girl, any more than I shall be the last, who has overheard a conversation not intended for her ears.

The speakers were Jack and Edgar, and they were having a very pretty little quarrel between themselves, and the best of it was the quarrel was all about me. You can't think what a lovely sensation it is to have two good-looking young fellows, both agreeable enough in their way, and both well off, fighting for you.

That great silly Jack, who had never had the courage to look me in the face and say he really cared for me, was pouring out such a lot of rhodomontade to Edgar about his heart, and his love and the light of his life, that he quite took my breath away, and Edgar, though not quite so enthusiastic, was asserting his right to pay attention to me so long as I was not formally "engaged."

Then Jack swore that he would go to London by the first train in the morning, and break up the party, unless his friend discontinued what he stigmatized as his "ungentlemanly conduct;" and Edgar declared that if he did not know how to behave decently, it was the best thing he could do, and then they both began to use very big words indeed; and just as I was wondering whether I ought to call for help or ring the fire-bell if they began to fight, the smoke from one of their pipes (I wonder if there is any state of affairs under which a man does not smoke?) rose in the still night air to the window from which I leant, and got into my throat; and try all I would, I could not stifle a cough, and at that sound the voices ceased and the forms vanished as suddenly as the well-conducted ghost is supposed to do at cockcrow.

I stole to the little window.

I could hardly keep from laughing when I met them at breakfast next morning, but I gave them each a rose and a smile, while Laurence, whom for the moment I had forgotten, looked unutterable things from the window-seat, where he was pretending to read a two-week's old "A. SLOPER."

I had made up my mind that on this, the second day of our outing, we should meet Mr. Brandon, and sure enough, just as we had left the inn and were pulling towards the lock, who should we see sculling rapidly towards us in a light outrigger but that supercilious gentleman in person.

Under ordinary circumstances his presence or absence would have been a matter of perfect indifference to me, but bearing in mind the quarrel of the preceding night, it seemed prudent to have reserve male force in our party in the event of the defection of Jack or Edgar.

(To be continued in our next.)

AUSTERE PATER. I have never heard any one except you, Sir, say one word in approval of it.

WHO CARES FOR THE SNOW?

HERE WE ARE AGAIN!

. *There has not been very much skating this year up to now, it's true, but* IKEY and ALLY *managed to do pretty well on Christmas Day.*

1. You should have seen ALLY fastening on a chap's skates. "You're running the gimlet into me," said the chap. "I don't think I could pull it out agin' under a shillin'," said Mr. SLOPER.

2. No one could have been more attentive to the poor people who tumbled down and hurt themselves than Mr. Moses was.

3. There was one party who was a great skater, and he came down to the ice just to show the muffs how the thing ought really to be done.

4. Mr. Moses took care of his overcoat while he showed them. The spectators were much impressed.

5. Only, unfortunately, there happened to be a weak place in the ice, and the clever party went into it. Simultaneously Ikey and the coat were missing

6. The worst of it was all the blame fell upon poor ALLY, who made futile efforts to escape across the ice. He too got into a hole.

ONE TO UNCLE.

(Small Boy Home for the Holidays.)

Small Boy (reading). Uncle, what's a wiseacre?

Uncle (suffering excruciatingly from toothach, with the last but one left). A wiseacre? *(groans)* A Wisdom-tooth.

A Christmas Performance.

The Run-in Gallop.

Mrs. SLOPER got up to represent Ganymede in a Chrismas Pantomime. "I'll have your legs, Tottie," said the Eminent when he saw her.

THE FINE OLD WINTER.

'Bus Driver (in reply to complaint from passenger). Too cold for you? Nonsense! Regular old English style, I calls it. Does you good.

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